



CASE STUDY: Using adolescent and youth experiences of violence in Uganda to inform our advocacy efforts

In **Uganda**, ChildFund has played a lead role in the first *National Survey on Violence Against Children (VAC)*.^{xxviii} Conducted in partnership with the Government of Uganda, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other children's agencies, this large-scale research initiative has shed light on the sexual, physical and emotional violence experienced by Ugandan children and youth across the country.^{xxix}

"We will use these findings to wake people up to reality. We can now go to policy-makers with hard evidence that will help us to make the case for child protection and will persuade them to back up their commitments with resources."

-ChildFund Uganda Child Protection Specialist

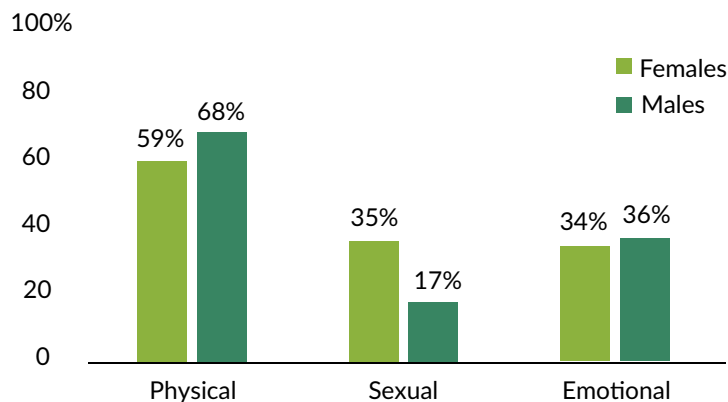
The research highlights the prevalence of different types of violence for Ugandans ages 13 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years, as well as the perpetrators, location, and time of incidents, the impact on youth and adolescents' physical and mental health, and the circumstances in which they receive social services. The analysis goes further to capture information about children's sexual

risk-taking, HIV testing behavior, and attitudes toward gender and interpersonal violence. It is the first VAC survey to provide regional-level data, allowing comparison of (and, eventually, a more nuanced response to) violence across different parts of the country.

The picture that emerges is alarming. The survey indicates that among youth ages 18 to 24 years:

- 35% of female respondents and 17% of male respondents have experienced **sexual violence** during their childhoods, most often in their homes and at school, and at the hands of neighbors and friends.
- The majority of young women (59%) and young men (68%) ages 18 to 24 have experienced childhood **physical violence** – defined as punching, kicking, burning, or striking a child with an object. For these youth, about 20% of young women and 16% of young men experienced their first incident of physical violence at or before age 5.

Experience of Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Violence Experienced in Childhood Among Youth Ages 18-24 Years



Among Ugandans ages 13 to 17 years, 44% of girls and 59% of boys experienced **physical violence** in the 12 months preceding the survey. Emotional violence is also widespread and damaging for both age groups.

Parents, adult relatives and teachers were all cited as perpetrators of violence. The impact on children included: physical health problems, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, mental distress and self-harm, and missed school attendance.

The conclusions of the VAC study have provided the Government of Uganda with compelling evidence about the scale of violence against children and youth – and a unique opportunity to respond. ChildFund has joined forces with the Government of Uganda and partners to disseminate the survey findings across the country and to develop a **National Action Plan** to address violence against children in schools, homes and communities. Moving forward, this evidence will help ChildFund to monitor and support Uganda’s progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16.2.